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The Muslim Awrah

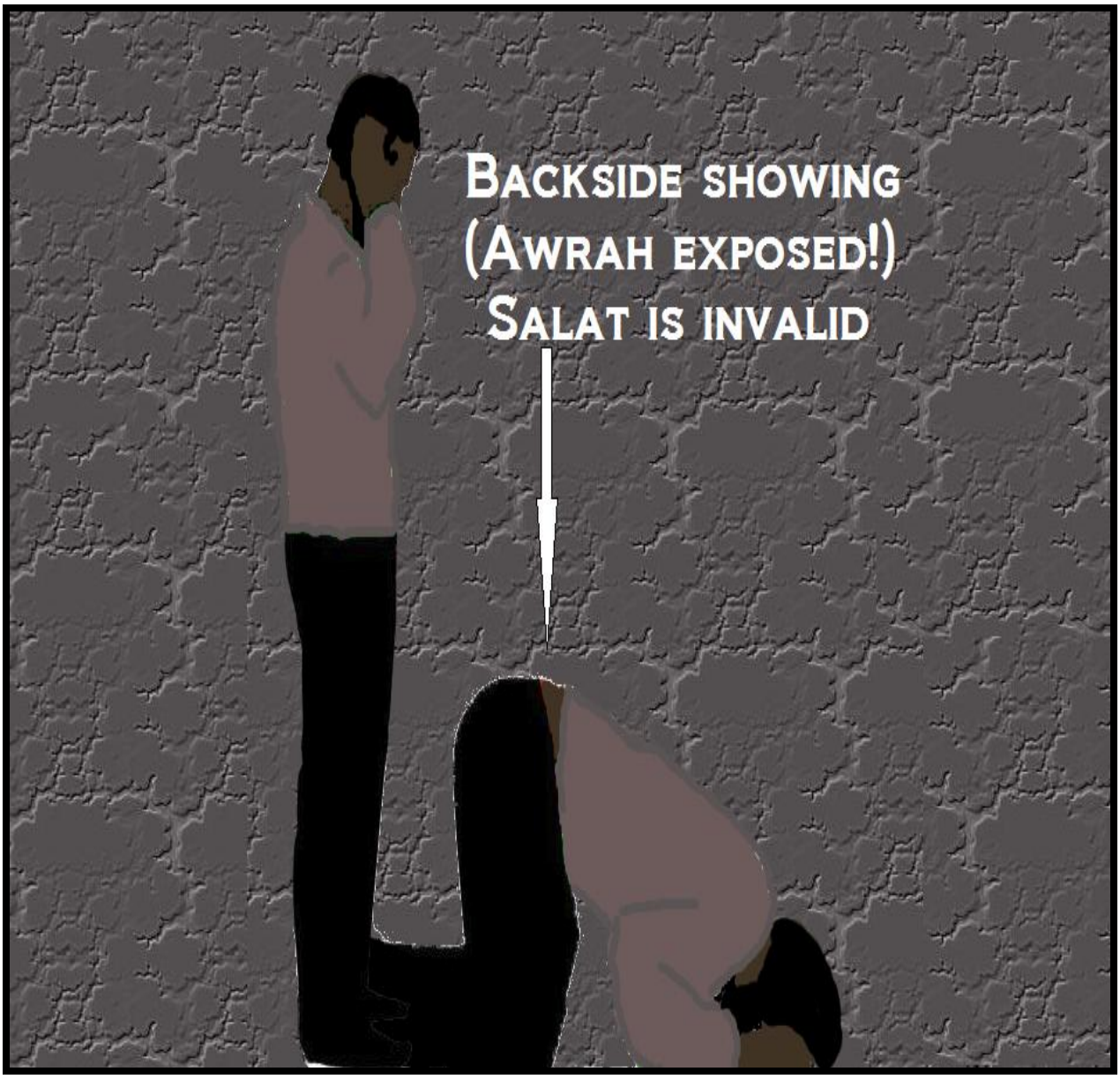
Awrah:

Covering one's awrah in addition to being a prerequisite of salat for a Muslim; which includes the area between the navel and the knees for a man and the entire body, except the face and hands for a woman, it is also a basic requirement for one to be deemed fully dressed.

The evidence for this ruling is found in Surah Al-Araf (7:31) of the Quran which reads: " **O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer...**" Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri declares: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'No man should look at the awrah of another man and no woman should look at the awrah of another woman. No man should be with another man under one cover and no woman should be with another woman under one cover.'"** Thus, indicating that the garment being worn must cover the entire awrah.

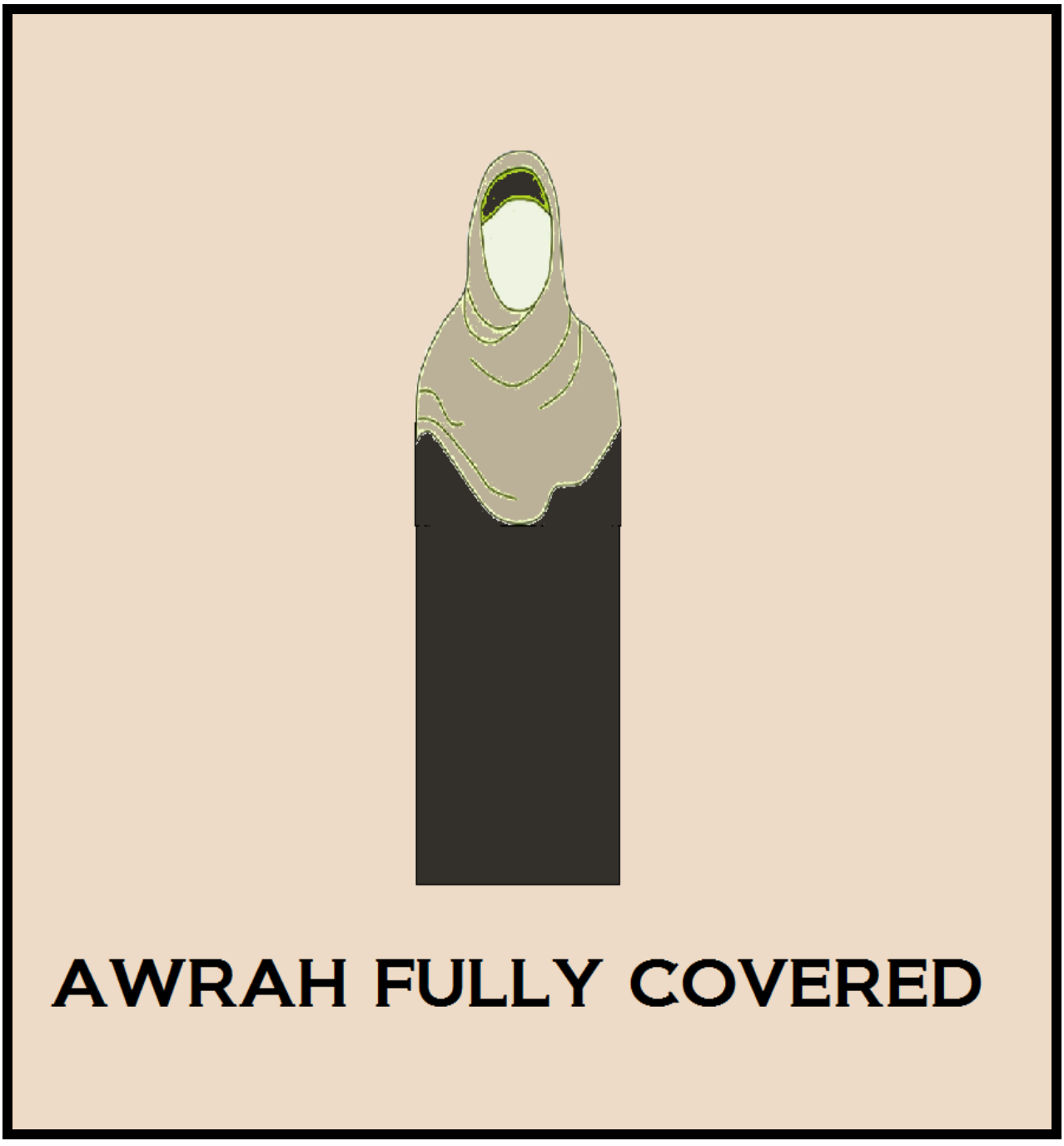
Regarding what constitutes the awrah of a man, a hadith of Ahmad reports: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'What is between navel and knee is Awrah.'"** Thus indicating that the male garment must at least cover the area between the navel and knees. This fact is further supported by a hadith of Bukhari wherein Said bin Al Harith narrated: **"I asked Jabir bin 'Abdullah about praying in a single garment. He said, 'I traveled with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) during some of his journeys, and I came to him at night for some purpose and I found him praying. At that time, I was wearing a single garment with which I covered my shoulders and prayed by his side. When he finished the prayer, he asked, 'O Jabir! What has brought you here?' I told him what I wanted. When I finished, he asked, 'O**

Jabir! What is this garment which I have seen and with which you covered your shoulders?' I replied, 'It is a (tight) garment.' He said, 'If the garment is large enough, wrap it round the body (covering the shoulders) and if it is tight (too short) then use it as an Izar (to be tied around one's waist/navel, which hangs down below the knees).'"



Regarding the awrah of a woman, the Quran in Suran Al-Ahzab (33:59) reads **"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."** More explicit details are also found

in a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Aisha, declared: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a khimar (headscarf covering the hair, ears neck and bosom)**."



Furthermore, another hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Aisha serves as evidence that only the face and hands are permitted to be exposed. The hadith in question maintains: **"Asma, daughter of AbuBakr, entered upon the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) wearing thin clothes. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) turned his attention from her. He said: 'O Asma, when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it is not fitting that**

any part of her should be seen except this,' and he pointed to her face and hands.'" Thus, it becomes clear that the awrah of a woman consists of everything except her face and hands. It is also important to note that the garments covering the awrah must not be form-fitting or transparent. These points are verified by the following hadith: Abu Hurayrah reported in a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: **"There are two types of people of Hell that I have never seen; people with whips like the tails of cattle, with which they strike the people, and women who are dressed but appear naked, walking with an enticing gait, with their heads looking like the humps of camels, leaning to one side. They will never enter Paradise, nor even smell its fragrance, although its fragrance can be discerned from such and such a distance."**

Lastly, a Hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi that was narrated by Ibn 'Umar that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H) said: **"One who lets loose his dress by way of pride, Allah will not look towards him on the Day of Judgment. On this Umm Salama said: 'What should women do with their trains of gowns?' The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: 'Women are to let down (their gowns) one span of the hand more.' She said: 'This means that their feet will be uncovered.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: 'So, they have to lower their garments an arm's length, and no more.'"**

OPTIONAL COVERING

Taharah (purity of body, clothes, and location):

Purity constitutes another prerequisite of salat. One must ensure that their body, garments, and prayer area are free from all impurities. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prayed with us one day. Whilst he was engaged in the prayer he took off his shoes and placed them on his left. When the people saw this, they took off their shoes. When he finished his prayer he said, Why did you take your shoes off? They said, 'We saw you taking your shoes off, so we took our shoes off.' He said, 'Verily Jibreel came to me and informed me that there was dirt - or he said: something harmful - (in another narration: filth) on my shoes, so I took them off. Therefore, when one of you goes to the mosque, he should look at his shoes; if he sees in them dirt - or he said: something harmful - (in another narration: filth) he should wipe them and pray in them.**'"

In instances wherein one is unable to perform salat due to minor impurities, then wudu should be made as a means of purification. However, is one is impure due to major impurities, as in the case of post sexual intercourse, then a complete ghusl (ritual bath/shower) must be performed.